

□

(WASHINGTON, DC) – U.S. Representative Chet Edwards has won approval for funds that will help widen I-35 in McLennan County under the 2011 Transportation Appropriations bill, which passed the House Thursday. This action came at the request of the City of Waco.

Edwards, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee said, *“Improving I-35 in McLennan County will benefit the local economy, help reduce congestion, and improve safety and quality of life for area families.”*

Waco Mayor Jim Bush said, *“Improvements to I-35 is our number one transportation priority and this is great news with the limited funds available to accomplish the needed widening of this critical roadway. We are very appreciative of Congressman Edwards’ work on our behalf.”*

Specifically, Edwards designated \$2 million under the bill at the request of the city of Waco to help widen I-35. McLennan County is scheduled to receive approximately \$550 to \$600 million in Prop 12 bond funding through the Texas Department of Transportation for I-35, which the federal funds secured by Edwards will support. In McLennan County, the highway will be expanded from Woodlawn Road to FM 2063 in Hewitt and from North Loop 340 to FM 1858 in West and the expansion will be from 4 to 6 lanes.

In 2009, Edwards sent a letter encouraging the Texas Transportation Commission to commit \$1 billion in Prop 12 bond funds towards I-35 improvements across McLennan, Hill and Bell counties. The federal funds secured by Edwards will be allocated toward the unfunded portion of the project, which would prevent some offsets from having to be made on critical transportation projects elsewhere in the Waco community.

The bill must still pass the Senate and be signed by the President.